

## KEY WEST IS UNIQUE

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**Peculiarities of Its Houses and Streets—Its People Are Opposed to Much Exertion Except in Boarding a Wreck.**

This is one of the funniest towns in the United States, writes the Key West correspondent of the Boston Herald. It is made up of innumerable little wooden houses, without chimneys, but crowded in irregular groups.


Many of the houses have wooden shutters in place of glass windows. The stranger is first impressed by the number of men and women that are seen hanging by their stomachs on the window sills, apparently undecided which way to fall.

On most of the streets there are no

sidewalks, but people stumble over the jagged edges of coral rock. The natives who wear shoes ride in carriages. There are a great number of public vehicles, and one can be hailed at any corner and engaged for 10 cents.

Some of these carriages are quite respectable in appearance. They are generally double seated affairs, which have been discarded in the North. The horses are wrecks, and they show by their appearance that fodder is dear and that they are not half fed.

One of the sounds of Key West is the



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**Key West's Newspaper.**

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The climate, of which much has been written, is too good to be wasted, and there are no realizable economic mental efforts by either the makers or the readers of newspapers.

Hundreds of dogs, cats, roosters, goats, and "razorbacks" run at large through the streets, and the three former combine to make night hideous. In the early evening the sound of negro meetings and jublations predominates. Then the cats begin where the shouters leave off. Later, the dogs, baying and howling, announce their presence more than any other species, take up

[illegible]

pectable people, it also has a shoddy class, whose ignorance of the rest of the world carries them to grotesque extremes in their efforts to proclaim their greatness.

To an outsider it seems strange to see people all bound up with family relationships trying to exceed one another in arrogance and superciliousness, assumed without malice, but from a mistaken sense of social responsibility.

**The Schools.**

Even in its schools, Key West is peculiar. The school houses are built like cigar factories, and each has mounted upon the roof the bell of an old locomotive. When

the school bells are ringing it is easy to tell if you eyes are resting on the old one of the old railway depots of the North. The classes are large, the teachers have a constant struggle with the climate, so the scholars have time to make the most of the sun and the air, and the culture for the unsuspecting visitor that falls into their ambush.

If the teachers have a hard time, the clergy have a worse one. The churches are the only places where a clergyman can find patronage and a meager support. It is enough to say that when a child has strayed from home the fire alarm is sounded, and the chime bells are made to play "Under the Star of David" for the lost child. The theaters are seldom open, and are

even more rudgerudgerly supported than are the churches. The decorations have been likened to cockney on a colliery, and the men who are in the pews are seen to react by shouting "fire," to startle strangers who do not know the joke.

Men that smoke presume that cigars are manly and the best, but there is another source of income that scarcely less importance. Any unfortunate ship that ventures into port is considered legitimate prey, and it is a bold man that dares to protest against the practice of piracy on property. It is not an unheard-of thing for a minister seeking popularity to pray for more wrecks, just as a Western minister might pray for rain. When a ship is seen

ment prevails, and some people even fall on their knees to petition for her speedy destruction.

**When There Is a Wreck.**

Sometimes when they think a ship is "safe" on the rocks, she changes her course and keeps off. Then the swearing begins, and the skipper is cursed for a tricky scoundrel.

If a vessel strikes, she is immediately surrounded by a crowd of wreckers, who cling to her like flies to a molasses barrel. The captain is visited with bribes and threats. Everybody takes charge, and when the captain tries to speak all around him they say, "Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!"

he gives in. The vessel is sometimes taken to New Orleans with the whole colony of wreckers aboard, each man being afraid to trust anyone to represent him at the sale.

After there has been a wreck, storekeepers have money in their pockets and do not care whether you buy of them or not. The proprietors of the stores, however, are not so generous and finally saunter over toward his customer to find what is wanted.

When the wreck-money is gone, the bar-rooms, which have had at least a fair share of the booty, are left to the storekeepers, interpreted to mean, "Fray, you conches, pray for another wreck!"

There are a few hotels, boarding houses

and other unattractive necessities in Key West. The type of young woman who has an ambition to marry a naval officer and see the world. There are some of this sort who have failed to attach themselves during the gathering of the fleet, and the excitement of war is increasing their ranks.

There are also some unattached fleet that have failed to escape from the balmey coral reef in the forecastle of an American warship.

**Naturalistic Mathematics.**

I'll wed some meek, submissive man,  
For reasons poor, though few,  
I'd rather be the wife of a poor man  
Than the better half of two. —*W. D. Howells*

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